

# Western & Southern Open

Tuesday, August 15, 2017

## John Isner

### Press Conference

J. ISNER/T. Paul

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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Thoughts on him? He's having a really good summer. Thoughts on that match?**

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, he has had a good summer. It's good to see, because I think ever since he's turned pro I think he would admit it's been a bit of a struggle for him.

I think he's started to find his footing on tour and winning some ATP matches, a handful of them. I think for him it's very encouraging going forward. I'm happy to see that.

But tonight, for me, I played a good match and happy to get off the court I think in under an hour.

**Q. As that person who was a finalist here before, do you feel like this is a special place for you? Not only because it's an American tournament but also because you have done so well here before?**

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, it's a very special tournament. You know, I think this year I'm really liking the conditions so far this year. When I played two matches on center court, I don't think I could pick a better court to play on for me. It's very good.

So I think the conditions here are nice. Played two matches at 7:00, it's been absolutely perfect, not a lick of wind. Yeah, a little humid, a little hot, but perfect conditions for me.

**Q. What do you think about the Georgia Bulldogs this year? Going to do okay this year?**

JOHN ISNER: Football? Yeah, they were picked to win the East again, which seems like they're picked to win the East every year. I don't know if that's a good thing.

But I'm encouraged. I think they got the right guy calling the shots in Kirby Smart and he's recruiting well. Mark Richt recruited well also, but you're in a state, a rich state with a lot of talent, but of course you're competing with Alabama, Auburn, Georgia Tech, Tennessee. It's tough. Clemson.

But I think Georgia is on the right track and they have a



quarterback right now who a lot of people are saying could be a future No. 1 pick. So I think they're going to do well.

**Q. Having such a successful night and getting off the court quickly, what were the things you were focusing on today? Sometimes when you play someone that's more of an up-and-coming player, they don't have as much to lose. They are just hitting lights out. What were your thoughts going in?**

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, I have played matches like that before. And I think a lot of matches where it's on paper I'm the favorite, and a lot of times I have gone out there and when that big point, maybe that break point comes around, I've played a little bit tentative. I haven't treated it like a regular point.

That was not the case tonight. When I had break point, I went after it and put good returns in the court and played aggressively, especially that first one in the first set. I mean, I think the second serve and third ball I followed it with a good approach shot and won the point. That's nice.

I have tried for that to be my theme since Wimbledon, because that's not what I did at Wimbledon. It's worked out very nicely so far. I just lost one match since Wimbledon, against Del Potro last week, and he flat out outplayed me. I left, I walked off the court that night not hanging my head at all; just knowing that I got outplayed. Yeah, I could have done some things better, but he was just a much better player that night.

Outside of that match, I have played extremely well this summer and just going after my shots.

**Q. You have a possible pretty tough match with Sascha again next round. After that, this draw is wide open. There are only three top-10 guys in the field. None of them played yet, so we don't know how well they are going to do. As someone who has been wanting a Masters title for a long time, does this seem like, barring your next match, this could be a really good chance for somebody to get a first title?**

JOHN ISNER: Well, for sure. I think, what is it, only three of the top 10 are here right now. So it's an opportunity for a lot of players. Sascha does, of



course, needs to win tomorrow. You know, who knows how he's going to rock up after D.C. and Montreal? I have seen him the last two days. He seems fine and pretty jovial and in good spirits. Of course, why wouldn't he be after those two tournaments? Physically he looks great.

I think he recognizes that, as well. I think he's looked at the draw and seen that Roger is out and Milos is out. So I think his eyes are kind of popped wide open again. He's looking for another one.

If I do play him, it will be a huge challenge. For me, he's definitely the guy to beat right now on tour. As I said, if I do play him, I'll be very much looking forward to that and definitely think I can give him a good tussle.

It would be a very big challenge, but as I said, he's got to win. He's playing Frances who I know, someone who always rises to the occasion on a big match. He plays his best tennis on a big stage, so they should have a pretty big match tomorrow.

**Q. I was in Atlanta watching you. Seems like your forehand is better than ever. Serve/return, seems like you're trying to set it up. Has that been a part of your strategy? What's been the plan with the forehand? How's it feeling?**

JOHN ISNER: It's always a part of my strategy, but I think sometimes in recent times I have taken the court with really not the right mentality, a little bit too tentative. So it's not that I have hit the practice courts harder or hit the gym harder, because I haven't. I have just done what I have always been doing, and that's work hard.

But I think I have taken the court with the right mindset really knowing there is only one way I can play and be happy with the result no matter what, whether I win or lose.

And I also think from winning matches, which I have done this summer, inevitably your footwork becomes better when you're more confident. Me being so big, if my footwork is off, I can spray balls everywhere. That hasn't really been the case this summer, so that's pretty encouraging going forward.

**Q. I thought you have been moving better, too.**

JOHN ISNER: Thanks. It's all about confidence.

**Q. State of mind?**

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, of course, state of mind and running around my backhand when I have the time and when I should do that. I think I have been doing that.

**Q. You kind of mentioned "tentative" a few times in**

**this conversation. Being aware of that, when you find yourself in those moments where maybe you realize you're being tentative, are you aware of the kind of messages you're telling yourself internally?**

JOHN ISNER: Well, I think in that situation, for me, I'm not really telling myself anything. I think my mind is like a bit cloudy. When I'm not tentative, I'm not really thinking at all. I'm just kind of living in the moment and kind of, I guess, can join the process of it and not worry about the result. You hear that a lot about athletes, not just in tennis but in all sports.

There has been some matches these last two years where that hasn't been the case and I just wanted to win so bad that I lose track of the task at hand really. And the worst feeling is going out there and on a big point and just hoping to win the point, hoping that my opponent makes a mistake. Even if they do, it doesn't feel good. It's stressful.

You know, what feels good is on that big point, going out and playing the right way and winning the point. That's what really gives you confidence going forward.